COMIC SHOP NEWS

Glory? Glory! Hallelujah!

When Image first revealed plans to bring back several *Rob Liefeld*-originated Extreme Studios titles, many were apprehensive that the end result might be a wave of undistinguished superhero adventure titles. What Image is delivering, however, is much more than that—and no book demonstrates that change better than ***Glory* #23,** the first issue of the relaunch.

She may have begun her comic book existence as a Wonder Woman analogue, but the Rob Liefeld heroine has abandoned her rather straightforward roots to become the focus of a complex, character-driven saga as a part of Image Comics' Extreme Studios relaunch—and the man responsible for that new direction is *Joe Keatinge*, who manages to blend elements of Liefeld's ***Glory***, *Alan Moore's* short-lived relaunch, and Keatinge's own vision of who and what the character should be.

For readers unfamiliar with ***Glory***, Keatinge offered a synopsis of the character and the series. "Glory's the product of a union between two nations warring over another realm called Thule. They were going at it for longer than Earth has ever even existed. In an effort to end the war, Glory was born from a warrior queen and a demon king, then trained since birth to be the weapon that destroys either side that breaks their truce. After hundreds upon hundreds of years of training, she began to get sick of it and fled to Earth to check out these fascinating human beings she kept hearing about."

How did Keatinge become involved with the relaunch? "As I understand it, I became involved fairly early on in the process," Keatinge said. "Image Comics Publisher *Eric Stephenson* and I spitball ideas back and forth just in general pretty regularly and he mentioned way back in November, 2010 that he had something brewing with Extreme creator *Rob Liefeld*. He asked me to pitch for ***Glory***—and after both he and Rob approved it, we were on!"

Was the current direction of ***Glory*** something that had been mapped out by Liefeld and Stephenson, or was this take entirely Keatinge's? "There seems to be an awful lot of kismet going on here," Keatinge explained. "For instance, I know *Erik Larsen* came up with his direction on ***Supreme*** completely independently from Rob. However, I also heard what Rob hoped someone would do with ***Supreme*** and it was very, very much in line with where Erik's going. Same with ***Glory***. I came up with my pitch without talking word one with Rob—but again, it was exactly what he was looking for. The guy's also been very, very awesome in terms of feedback."

As mentioned earlier, Glory began as a sort of Wonder Woman analogue, but Keatinge has taken the character in some very different directions in this relaunch. What inspired the changes? "I saw a lot of potential to be more than she was. Wonder Woman is awesome, but write *Wonder Woman* when you write Wonder Woman!" Keatinge said. "I was very young when the Extreme comics initially came out, and they had a definite impact on me. While I loved—and still do love—Marvel and DC characters, the Image Comics characters were—and still very much are—an equal pantheon in my eyes. Maybe it also helps that I haven't read a ton of ***Wonder Woman*** comics. I don't have a huge nostalgic value in rehashing a run that I loved. I wanted to do something new. I'd ideally like to live in a world where there are so many female characters the instant comparison to Wonder Woman becomes extinct."

Interestingly, the protagonist of the book isn't Glory, but is instead a young woman named Riley Barnes. Who is she, and what makes her so essential to the story? "Riley's a young journalism student who decided to do her thesis about Glory, where she's gone, and what happened to her. The world hasn't heard from Glory in a really long time," Keatinge said. "Riley is the massive key to my entire run on ***Glory***, which I hope goes for a *very* long time. There's the obvious element about her being who we relate to, but she has an essential place in the mythology of Glory. The first arc, 'Once & Future,' expands on Glory's past, present, and future and you'll definitely get more of an idea of why Riley is so important over the course of those three issues."

As the series begins, Glory has been gone for roughly five years. In researching the heroine and her disappearance, Barnes learns that neither humans nor superhumans ever seemed to truly understand—or trust—Glory. "Absolutely not," Keatinge affirmed. "Glory's not a superhero, not really. She's a *weapon*. She's also hundreds of years older than most everyone on Earth. She's something different and has a confident arrogance in everything she does. They perceive her as reckless, as willing to do anything and let anything get destroyed in an effort to achieve her goals. And they're right."

Very early on, Keatinge establishes that Glory can be extremely brutal in her actions; he also makes it clear that she will dedicate herself to doing what she sees as right, even if the harshness of her actions might shock many. In many ways, she seems to have become a sort of Nietzschean ubermensch, driven by her own sort of "master morality." Is that a fair characterization? "Oh, you nailed it!" Keatinge said. "Glory has a solid perception of how she thinks things should be done and for the most part, it's beneficial to society. She doesn't want people oppressed. She believes in maintaining people's free will. So, good stuff. The problem is, she's very much unwilling to hear what another opposing force might want, even if they're talking negotiation. She's a force of nature much more so than any other superhero I can think of."

Riley's quest for Glory leads her to cross paths with another Glory in the first issue; who is she, and how important is her role in the story? "The 'other Glory' is actually Gloria West, who long time ***Glory*** fans will remember from *Alan Moore's* brief run with the character," Keatinge said. "During that run, ***Glory*** decided she wanted to actually live as a human being, to understand them better. So her consciousness was merged into Gloria's, causing Gloria to think she was schizophrenic as she began hearing this faint voice in her head. Glory also had the ability to essentially morph into her self, with Gloria then taking the back seat. A lot like how *C.C. Beck* originally portrayed Captain Marvel's and Billy Batson's relationship.

"In my run, they're no longer one being for reasons people will have to read to find out. That said, her role is to somewhat hopefully keep Glory grounded. Gloria is the one person—human or otherwise—that Glory seems to ever listen to... and even then, it's rare!"

Keatinge makes a shocking revelation regarding Glory in the final pages of ***Glory* #23**; it's a bold and unexpected change for the character. Did Keatinge have any second thoughts as he built up to that climax? "Absolutely none. It was drastic, absolutely, but I think having such an element of unpredictability is essential to storytelling, whether it's in comics or not. I want people to read my stuff knowing that absolutely no one is safe, that none of my characters are pastiches to past characters or rely in their rules. I want absolutely anything to be possible. And as the ending of ***Glory* #23** shows, it is."

Not only is Keatinge's story taking the book in a bold new direction, but the art by *Ross Campbell* is likewise giving the book a distinctive look that is totally unlike its prior Liefeld-influenced visual style. Was Rob Liefeld supportive of the new team giving the book such a different look and feel? "I think a lot of people get the wrong impression of Rob's taste in comics. He loves the entire medium, not just the stuff that happens to look like his own work," Keatinge said. "I could talk to him about Moebius just as much as I could anyone else. He's also incredibly enthusiastic about new talent and was instantly stoked to have Ross on board. In terms of my own work, Rob has pretty much been my biggest cheerleader. I owe that guy

Courtesy your friendly neighborhood comics outlet!

pretty big just in terms of always encouraging us and keeping stoked."

How long is Keatinge committed to *Glory*—and can he and Campbell keep it on schedule (an important consideration as readers become less tolerant of late or irregularly-published books)? "I am personally committed to writing the book until issue #100, which is just over 75 issues from now, as long as sales and editorial allows it," Keatinge said. "Who can say what will happen that far in the future? But for now, Ross has just finished drawing our third issue and is already drawing our fourth, which will be done by the time the first issue hits the stands. We're pretty determined to keep this thing going for a very long time and aiming to keep it on a monthly schedule."

Glory #23, a $2.99 comic by *Joe Keatinge & Ross Campbell*, is offered with two covers—one by Campbell and the other by *Rob Liefeld*. Look for it in comic shops on February 15th.

by Cliff Biggers

COMIC SHOP NEWSARAMA

Produced by *Comic Shop News* in cooperation with *newsarama.com*

CSNsider

•A few months ago, *CSN* told you about Dynamite's upcoming *Shadow* comic book series based on the classic pulp hero. Now we can tell you that the comic book will be written by none other than *Garth Ennis*, best known for his work on ***The Boys***, ***Punisher***, and ***Preacher***. The series wil be illustrated by *Aaron Campbell*, who has worked on Dynamite's ***Sherlock Holmes*** and ***Green Hornet: Year One***. (And be here next week as we talk with *Garth Ennis* and *Aaron Campbell* to get more info about their plans for the new series!)

•DC is adding combo pack polybagged editions for ***Green Lantern*** and ***Detective Comics*** beginning in April with the eighth issue of each series. They'll join ***Justice League, Action Comics, & Batman***, which are already offered in standard and combo pack editions.

•DC has also confirmed that both ***Batman*** and ***Detective Comics*** are expanding from 32 page $2.99 comics to 40 page $3.99 comics in 2012; there will be a "story reason" for the change, DC said, with other sources reporting that DC would be adding new backup features to both books.

•And if you were wondering just how big a success DC's New 52 relaunch was—well, the publisher has released some hard numbers for first-issue sales on three of their series, and the results are stunning. Turns out that ***Justice League #1*** sold 361,138 copies in its various editions through mid-December, while ***Batman #1*** sold 262,379 copies and ***Action Comics #1*** sold 250,898 copies. No other publishers' offerings topped the 200K mark (Marvel's best-selling 2011 book was ***Ultimate Comics Spider-Man #160*** at 159,355 copies).

•*Mark Millar's* ***Supercrooks #1*** will have a previously unsolicited 1-for-25 variant cover by *Dave Gibbons*.

•Writer *Dan Slott* will be joined by co-writer *Christopher Yost* for ***Amazing Spider-Man #679.1 & 680***.

•Writer *Peter David* will be joined by co-writer *Robin Furth* for ***Dark Tower: Gunslinger—Way Station #3***.

•Almost all of the Public Service Announcement comics originally scheduled for inclusion in ***Spider-Man: PSA's TP*** have been removed, resulting in the books' retitling. The new book will be called ***Spider-Man Fights Substance Abuse***, and will weigh in at less than half the pagecount originally planned for the *PSA's* volume. The new book will reprint ***Amazing Spider-Man #s 96-98; Spider-Man, Storm and Power Man; Amazing Spider-Man: Skating on Thin Ice!; Amazing Spider-Man: Double Trouble!; Fast Lane #s 1-4;*** and ***Spectacular Spider-Man 1000***.

•***Disney/Pixar Presents Cars: Route 66 Dash*** has been cancelled by Marvel and will not be resolicited.

•Beginning in January, Marvel will discontinue polybagging for their combo pack comics that include a digital download coe; instead, the digital code will appear on a peel-off code sticker applied to page 32 of the comic.

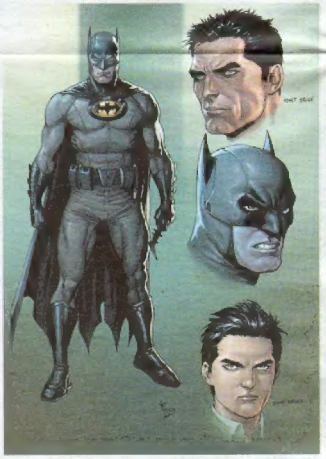
Earth One for Two in 2012

2010 saw the debut of DC's ***Earth One*** line of original graphic novels with the release of ***Superman Earth One*** by *J. Michael Straczynski & Shane Davis*. Alas, there were no followup ***Earth One*** volumes in 2011—but 2012 will see the release of *two* books, one featuring Batman and the other continuing the exploits of Superman.

Batman: Earth One, slated for May release, presents *Geoff Johns & Gary Franks'* retelling of the Batman legend in a contemporary setting. This marks the first original graphic novel for Johns, who has thrilled readers for years with his storytelling in DC's monthly comics and event miniseries.

According to DC's *Josh Kushins*, the book will present a new vision of Batman as "a flawed and fallible hero who isn't yet the master of Gotham City's shadows."

"Gary and I are tackling Batman from the beginning, before he knows what he's doing and with a very different ultimate goal in mind," *Geoff Johns* said. "He's never left Gotham. And our Gotham and the people in it are very gray. Our heroes unlikely. Our villains hidden. Our story is only beginning with volume one."



SPIDER MAN
BY STAN LEE & LARRY LIEBER
FOR THE LAST TIME, I AM NOT YOUR GODDESS GIRLFRIEND!
POOR SIF! YOUR MEMORY WILL BE RESTORED, BELOVED—
—WHEN I HAVE TAKEN YOU BACK TO ASGARD!
YOU'RE NOT TAKING ME ANYWHERE!
YOU HEARD THE LADY, THOR.
STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 1-9-12
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"It's essentially the first piece of the jigsaw," *Gary Frank* added. "He's not the Batman people know, but he might be one day. He's certainly not yet a superhero. The fun is to watch him piece the persona together drawing on his experiences and the influences of those around him and, at this stage, the idea of becoming a 'superhero' hasn't even entered his head."

Later in 2012, *J. Michael Straczynski & Shane Davis* return with ***Superman: Earth One—Volume Two***, which "continues the fresh take on the youthful struggles of Krypton's superpowered survivor," Kushins said.

Writer *J. Michael Straczynski* is aware that readers have high expectations for the second graphic novel. "The overwhelming success of volume one of ***Superman: Earth One***—37 weeks on the ***New York Times*** best-seller list for graphic novels—meant we had to ensure that Volume Two was even better," said Straczynski. "We couldn't just rest on our laurels. (And does anyone actually rest on laurels? Are there gatherings of laurel-resters? If so, why haven't I been invited? These are the questions that keep me up at night while the rest of the world dreams.)

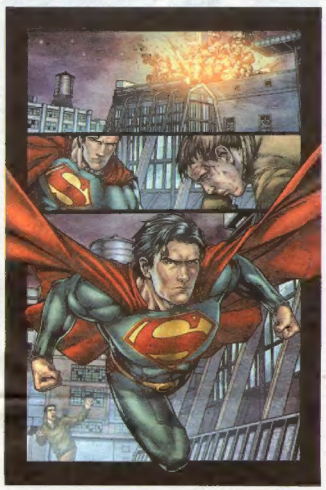
"Thematically, if ***Volume One*** was about Clark figuring out where he belongs, then ***Volume Two*** is about Superman trying to figure out where *he* belongs in all this, even as the world does the same at their end. How far can he push his power before he becomes something other than what he intended to become?

"In the midst of all this Clark gets his first apartment, becoming entangled with a beautiful woman next door, Lois starts trying to figure out what it is about Clark that doesn't add up, and a new and terrifyingly strong version of the Parasite is born from what was previously a serial killer…and now Superman has to confront someone who is not only as strong as he is, but can drain his power completely. In the aftermath of one of the massive battles that threatens to tear apart Metropolis, Clark for the first time feels what it's like to be normal, to be mortal, to be vulnerable…to be us.

"In the end, ***Volume Two*** is about power: its use and abuse, and its place in the world, to be used for good or for evil."

Artist *Shane Davis* explained that "working on ***Superman: Earth One—Volume Two*** gave me a chance to re-create one of Superman's villains, the Parasite. In doing so, I decided to develop the character in stages as the fights progress throughout the book. There are three stages of evolution: going from frail to the strongest villain Superman has ever faced. Earth One Parasite is one of the most complicated and disgustingly beautiful characters I have ever designed!

"I came at ***Volume Two*** in more of a movie sense, choreographing the fight scenes differently from one another, adding a little more muscle to Superman this time around as he is a practicing superhero, while drawing the 'Geek' Clark Kent, who loves a sweater! I always kept the old in mind while bringing in the new. ***Superman: Earth One—Volume Two*** is *the* book of 2012, so save those pennies!"



Neither ***Batman: Earth One*** nor ***Superman: Earth One*** are connected to DC's New 52 line; the standalone original graphic novels instead offer another contemporary reinterpretation of two of comics' most iconic heroes.

Cryptid Noir

There's no shortage of noir-styled drama in today's comics market—but *Joey Esposito & Jonathan Moore* present a new take on the archetypal genre in ***Footprints***, a graphic novel from 215 Ink.

"***Footprints*** is a hard-boiled mystery starring Bigfoot and a cast of other cryptid characters," Esposito told ***CSN***. "After about forty years not speaking, Bigfoot's estranged brother Yeti is murdered in the Arctic and so Foot reassembles their old team of private detectives—Nessy, Chupacabra, Jersey Devil and Megalodon—to figure out what happened. As you might expect, the murder goes back a long way, to their very origin as a team."

So it sounds like normal human beings are virtually in the minority in this series; just who *are* the strange beings who populate the series, and what roles do they play? "Foot is our lead; the gruff, hard-boiled detective that's seen it all," Esposito explained. "Loch Ness Monster is the no-frills tough gal that handles recon in ways that may or may not be morally acceptable. Jersey Devil is the hapless tag-along informant that speaks in a charmingly annoying 'Joisey' accent. Choop is the man-of-few-words muscle. Megalodon is... well, he's the gentleman that's stuck in the water and thus, often the outcast of the group. He wears a domino mask to compensate for his lack of general usefulness."

What led to Esposito's fascination with cryptozoology, and how'd he make the jump from strange unknown species to an anthropomorphic series that starred those same beings? "I've always just been fascinated by the idea of these undiscovered creatures living among us, sometimes right under our noses. I guess it's the same as anything; aliens, superpowers, ghosts, demonology. Except with cryptids, it feels more palpable because it has got a precedent for it," Esposito said.

"I mean, dinosaurs existed. We've sort of fantasized them at this point into these mythical creatures, but it's a fact that they once existed. Plus, we're always discovering new species and things. What's to say that these cryptids have never existed? Obviously I'm no scientist, but as a writer, there's something inherently intriguing about the idea.

"As for using them as characters, I find myself having an affinity for anthropomorphic characters in general. I'm not sure what the psychology behind that is, but it's true! In terms of ***Footprints***, using these characters presents a lot of interesting questions about us as humans, which we deal with a little bit in the series. Here are these creatures that have managed to survive in a very primitive way for centuries, but what happens once they integrate into society? How do they view us? Who are the real 'monsters'?"

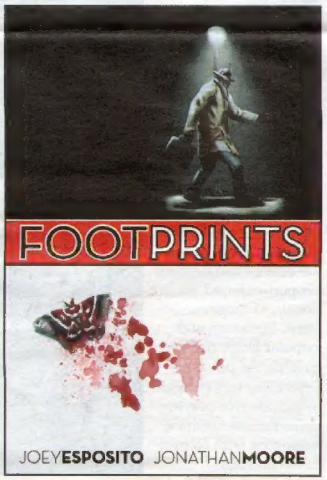
How did Esposito decide which cryptid archetype would fill the role of each noir character type? "A lot of that came pretty easily, actually. It all stems from a central character named Motheresa, who is very much the femme fatale of our story. If you know the myth of the Mothman, the idea is basically that it's a creature that is a harbinger of bad luck and misery. What else is a femme fatale than this alluring figure that only brings terrible things down on our lead character? In many ways, she's the key to this story.

"From there, it was pretty easy. Bigfoot is elusive, gruff, and camera shy, so he became our hard-boiled lead. Jersey Devil is the wise guy. Chupacabra is beastly and far more terrifying in appearance than the others, so he became the muscle. And Nessy is sleek and sexy—she's the team's bombshell. As human as these characters are portrayed, though, there's a definite reason that they are monsters. "

How did the noir angle become a part of the story? "It started a lot sillier than 'A Monster Murder Mystery,' believe it or not," Esposito explained. "***Footprints*** in general stemmed from this idea that if someone was to accidentally kill Bigfoot—hit them with their car on a dark country road or something—he'd be the most famous person on Earth. But what if he never reported it? What if he just kept driving? Who would investigate the murder?

"So then it morphed to this idea of a 'Justice League' of cryptids trying to find out who killed their friend, Watchmen-style. Eventually, I realized that a murder mystery like that would be right at home in a noir setting. Playing it relatively straight let me play up a lot of interesting parallels between what we think we know about these cryptids and the classic noir archetypes."

What convinced him that a noir drama would work with such an offbeat cast? "Honestly, it wasn't until I saw the concepts



I'LL THREATEN ANYONE WHO THREATENS HER!
THEN BE THANKFUL, MORTAL—
—THAT I'VE NO DESIRE TO SLAY A HUMAN!
OOOMPH!
SWAT!
STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 1-10-12

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and first pages from the book's artist and co-creator, *Jonathan Moore*, that I knew it would work. Jonathan's brilliant. There's a splash page in issue #1 (page 9) in which you see all of the team coming back together for the first time, and that was what really sealed the deal for me. Proving that it would work.

"Jonathan's a really diverse and accomplished artist; he uses a multitude of different materials and can do a variety of styles. Obviously ***Footprints*** is stark black-and-white, but I think Jonathan's devotion to accurate anatomy, artistic fundamentals, and being a true student of the medium helped to ground these characters in a realistic world with realistic emotions."

Will Esposito and Moore revisit these characters at some point in the future, or is ***Footprints*** a standalone project? "It honestly depends on how it does. Jonathan and I would love to, absolutely. We've already talked about what the next story is, and some others beyond that. We used Kickstarter to raise the funds for this series... luckily, we've since partnered with 215 Ink to handle things like printing and distribution, but it's been a costly series for me in terms of being able to pay Jonathan and our letterer *Adam O. Pruett* fair page rates. They've got families and this is the way they make their living. I've only got pets. But in general, yes, we'd love to do more. Time will tell!"

Footprints, an $11.99 graphic novel, is slated for late February release.

Dynamite Adds a New Path to Success

In the past few years, Dynamite Entertainment has become a major publisher in the field through a mix of original comics and licensed properties based on novels, videogames, films, literature, and popular genre fiction. In 2012, the publisher is expanding its line again to include role-playing-game licensed comics, beginning with comics based on Paizo Publishing's ***Pathfinder Roleplaying Game.***

"Launched in 2009, ***Pathfinder*** has taken the tabletop gaming world by storm," Dynamite's *Joseph Rybandt* said, "and is now tied with ***Dungeons & Dragons*** as the best-selling hobby roleplaying game in the world, spawning rulebooks, adventures, collectible figurines, and novels, as well as the forthcoming ***Pathfinder Online*** massively multiplayer computer game."

"We're thrilled to be working with Dynamite on a new ***Pathfinder*** comic!" Paizo Publisher *Erik Mona* said. "Dynamite's proven record with licensed properties and their ability to attract top creative talent to their books make them a natural fit for Pathfinder, and we can't wait to see how they explore the ***Pathfinder*** world!"

"When we sat down and first started speaking with Paizo, the excitement that Erik had for ***Pathfinder*** was amazing, and the success he and his team have had is well earned," Dynamite publisher *Nick Barrucci* added. "We're proud to be working with them to help bring Pathfinder to the comics market, and to bring our comics to their market. It's the best of both worlds. This is the start of a great working relationship."

No word yet on a specific release schedule for the first ***Pathfinder*** offerings—but as soon as the books are scheduled, you'll hear about it in ***CSN***!

Back to Press

- ***Carnage #1 2nd Printing*** NOV118101), in stores 2/1.
- ***Incredible Hulk #3 2nd Printing*** (NOV118142), featuring a variant cover by *Marc Silvestri*, in stores 2/15.
- ***Wolverine & the X-Men #3 2nd Printing*** (NOV118122), featuring a variant cover by *Chris Bachalo*, in stores 5/1.

CSN TOP

ACTION COMICS #6

Grant Morrison & Joshua Hale Fialkov (W); Matt Camp (A)
(DC DEC110209 $3.99)

What's the Scoop?

The Superman of the present joins forces with strangely different versions of the Legion of Super-Heroes to save the jeans-wearing Superman of five years ago.

Why Should You Care?

Grant Morrison continues to blend the excitement of the Silver Age Superman with 21st century storytelling sensibilities, and the results is a book that is irresistibly innovative and comfortably familiar at the same time.

AVENGERS: CHILDREN'S CRUSADE #9 (OF 9)

Allan Heinberg (W); Jim Cheung (A)
(Marvel NOV110503 $3.99)

What's the Scoop?

In the series finale, the final fate of the Scarlet Witch is revealed, an Avenger is buried, and the Young Avengers get a new lineup and a new direction.

Why Should You Care?

If the striking art of *Jim Cheung* isn't reason enough to add this one to your must-have list, then maybe the fact that this sets the stage for the upcoming ***X-Men Vs. Avengers*** event is!

BATGIRL #6

Gail Simone (W); Ardian Syaf & Vicente Cifuentes (A)
(DC DEC110231 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

Batgirl crosses paths with Batman for the first time since her miraculous rehabilitation... but is the Dark Knight willing to accept Batgirl back into the crimefighting fold?

Why Should You Care?

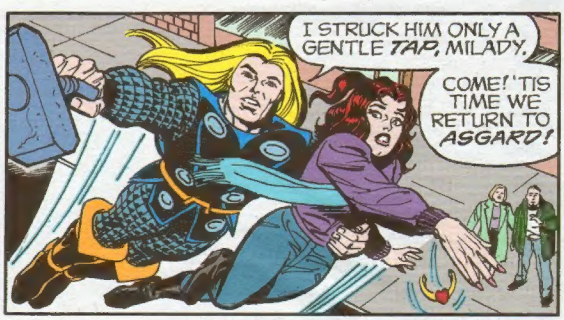
Few writers have blended elements of the old and new as well as *Gail Simone*, whose ***Batgirl*** tales acknowledge the history-making events of *Alan Moore's* ***Batman: The Killing Joke*** while freeing Barbara Gordon from her wheelchair. How'd it all happen? The search for the answer to that question is part of the series' appeal!

BATMAN BEYOND UNLIMITED #1

Adam Beechen & others (W); Norm Breyfogle, Dustin Nguyen, & others (A)
(DC DEC110238 $3.99)

What's the Scoop?

Terry McGuiness is back in action in a new monthly series... and he's not alone! Each issue features two stories, one featuring Batman Beyond and the other featuring Justice League Beyond!



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COMICS: FEBRUARY

Why Should You Care?

DC's Next-Gen 52? Whatever you call it, a series that offers two complete stories set in DC's near future is too fascinating to pass up!

CONAN THE BARBARIAN #1

Brian Wood (W); Becky Cloonan (A)
(Dark Horse DEC110047 $3.50)

What's the Scoop?

Conan heads for the high seas alongside the pirate queen Belit in the opening installment of "Queen of the Black Coast."

Why Should You Care?

Dark Horse takes Conan in a boldly different direction with the surprise creative team of *Brian Wood & Becky Cloonan*. Wood brings his Northlanders sensibility to Robert E. Howard's Cimmerian, while Cloonan illustrates the series in the same style as her under-appreciated "Wolves." If you think that *Demo* is the only story that these two can tell, you're in for a real surprise.

FANTASTIC FOUR SEASON ONE PREMIUM HC

Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa (W); David Marquez (A)
(Marvel NOV110658 $24.99)

What's the Scoop?

Reed Richards' plan to travel to the stars goes awry, transforming the scientist and his three partners into a quartet of heroes with amazing powers. And they're going to need them, what with the Mole Man, Doctor Doom, and the Sub-Mariner waiting in the wings...

Why Should You Care?

With this volume, Marvel kicks off a line of graphic novels presenting streamlined, modernized retellings of the origins of some of the company's most iconic characters. (Sure, no one can outdo what *Stan Lee & Jack Kirby* accomplished in those early issues of *Fantastic Four*, but that's not the goal here: Marvel wants to offer new readers a contemporary entry point into the wonders of the Marvel Universe, and these original graphic novels do just that.)

FRIENDS WITH BOYS GN

Faith Erin Hicks (W/A)
(First Second DEC111077 $15.99)

What's the Scoop?

An idyllic childhood of homeschooling comes to an end as Maggie McCay faces the complexities of contemporary high school life. And if high school isn't challenging enough, she also has to deal with the mystery of a melancholy ghost who continues to haunt her life.

Why Should You Care?

Faith Erin Hicks' graphic novel would be memorable enough if it were just a tale of teenage angst and adjustment, but the addition of a wistfully supernatural angle adds an intriguing facet to an already-memorable story. (Now, if we could just get a complete collection of her *Adventures of Superhero Girl*...)

GI JOE: A REAL AMERICAN HERO ANNUAL #1

Larry Hama (W); Ron Frenz, Ron Wagner, Herb Trimpe, & Sal Buscema (A)
(IDW DEC110402 $7.99)

What's the Scoop?

The Joes are on the trail of a rogue unit of Crimson Guardsmen... but Zartan and his Dreadnoks have been assigned by COBRA to handle the situation, which sounds like a situation tailor-made for mayhem...

Why Should You Care?

This extra-length story teams *Larry Hama* with some of the most distinctive artists of the Marvel era for an all-star adventure for a reunion that no self-respecting *GI Joe* fan wants to miss.

INFESTATION 2: TRANSFORMERS #1 (OF 2)

Chuck Dixon (W); Guido Guidi (A)
(IDW DEC110344 $3.99)

What's the Scoop?

The Infestation threat brings Lovecraftean monsters to be steampunk world of *Transformers: Hearts of Steel*, corrupting both humans and Decepticons.

Why Should You Care?

Last year's zombie *Infestation* was the first sleeper hit of 2011; this year's Lovecraftean onslaught looks to be every bit as popular... and every bit as hard to find!

JUSTICE LEAGUE #6

Geoff Johns (W); Jim Lee (A)
(DC DEC110188 $3.99)

What's the Scoop?

Their inter-League conflicts fall the by the wayside as the Justice League stands united against the menace of Darkseid.

Why Should You Care?

Geoff Johns & Jim Lee's tale of the origins of the League has set sales records, and with good reason: the high-energy tale of the heroes' first meeting reminds us of just how exciting DC's premier super-team *can* be!

KEVIN KELLER #1

Dan Parent (W); Dan Parent & Rick Koslowski (A)
(Archie NOV110730 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

This is a month of firsts for Kevin Keller: the first issue of his very own ongoing series, his first time as Riverdale High class president, his first article published in the newspaper, and his first date!

Why Should You Care?

The newest addition to the Riverdale gang has become a "favorite son" among comics fans—and when you add that to the fact that Archie comics are frequently underordered, you'd be wise to grab a copy of *Kevin Keller #1* before it disappears!

MUSE HC

Denis Pierre Filippi (W); Terry Dodson (A)
(Humanoids OCT111138 $29.95)

What's the Scoop?

A young woman is hired to serve as governess for wealthy and mysterious homeowners. The story is less *Turn of the Screw* and more *Cinemax After Dark*, though, as the tale takes a risqué turn.

Why Should You Care?

If you think that *Terry Dodson's* superheroine art is striking, just wait 'til you see him illustrating the exploits of the sensual Coraline in this titillating tale! *Adam Hughes*, watch out—there's someone after your "best good girl artist" title!

I FEEL LIKE I WAS RUN OVER BY A MACK TRUCK.
NO, NOW I REMEMBER—IT WAS NO TRUCK—
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RED SONJA/ WITCHBLADE #1

Doug Wagner (W); Cezar Razek (A)
(Dynamite DEC110972 $3.99)

What's the Scoop?

Red Sonja and Sara Pezzini confront the same menace in two different eras in this "not-your-everyday-crossover" crossover.

Why Should You Care?

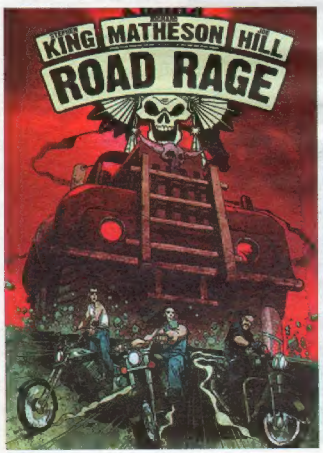
Rather than forcing Sonja and Sara to follow the clichéd "first we fight, then we team up, then we punch the bad guy" crossover model, *Doug Wagner* has constructed a unique tale that respects the distinctive qualities that define each heroine.

STEPHEN KING & JOE HILL'S ROAD RAGE #1 (OF 4)

Stephen King, Joe Hill, Chris Ryall, & Richard Matheson (W); Nelson Daniel (A)
(IDW DEC110367 $3.99)

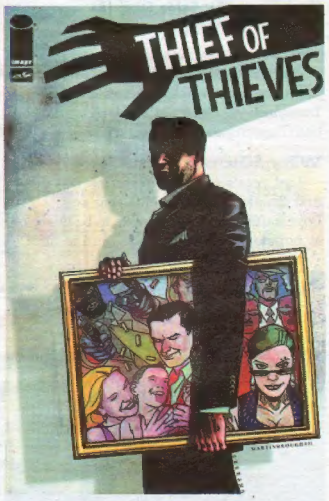
What's the Scoop?

You think that the tractor-trailer trucks that crowd your morning commute are trouble? The two tales in this series pit an unassuming motorist and a motorcycle gang against mayhem at the wheels of a psychopathic trucker.



Why Should You Care?

Richard Matheson's ***Duel*** is not only the inspiration for the film that put *Steven Spielberg* on the map, it's also the inspiration for "Throttle," the first collaboration by the father-and-son team of *Stephen King & Joe Hill*. This limited series adapts both stories... and when it's over, you'll never look at a passing truck the same way again!



THIEF OF THIEVES #1

Robert Kirkman & Nick Spencer (W); Shawn Martinbrough (A)
(Image DEC110449 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

A man whose seemingly normal life concealed a double identity as a master thief tries to reclaim his family and his ordinary existence before the FBI finally catch up to him... but it appears that they're the *least* of his worries...

Why Should You Care?

Walking Dead creator *Robert Kirkman* is joined by the ever-versatile star writer *Nick Spencer* (***Morning Glories, Ultimate Comics X-Men, THUNDER Agents***)... and that's all the reason you need if you're a fan of top-notch storytellling!

TWELVE #9 (OF 12)

J. Michael Straczynski (W); Chris Weston (A)
(Marvel DEC110663 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

As the time-stranded heroes of WWII continue their hunt for the mysterious killer, one of their own is about to fall...

Why Should You Care?

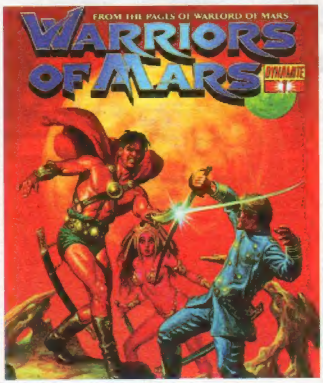
Many fans feared that ***The Twelve*** was destined to join the ranks of fondly remembered projects that were never completed, but the series is finished and ready to go—and that's great news for fans of JMS!

WARRIORS OF MARS #1

Robert Place Napton (W); Jack Jadson (A)
(Dynamite DEC110974 $3.99)

What's the Scoop?

Before John Carter paid his first visit to the Red Planet, another Earthman made the journey: Lt. Gullivar Jones. Now these two intrepid adventurers join forces for a fantastic sword-and-planet adventure on ERB's Barsoom.



Why Should You Care?

While *Edwin Arnold's* Gullivar has starred in his own comic book adventures in the past, ***Warriors of Mars*** marks the first time that these two iconic heroes have joined forces for a full-length adventure.

Check 'Em Out: Books You Should Be Reading

ANIMAL MAN #6

(DC DEC110250 $2.99)

Before he and his family became hunted by The Rot, Buddy Baker starred in a low budget indie superhero film. Now we get to "watch" the movie, courtesy of "director" *Jeff Lemire* and guest "cinematographer" *John Paul Leon*, who illustrates the movie sequences.

ARMY OF DARKNESS ONGOING #1

(Dynamite DEC111002 $3.99)

Who is the woman named 'Ash' and what relation does she have to 'The Chosen One' Ashley J. Williams? And who is the alien Deadite creature who follows her across time? Find out in the first issue of the new ongoing series!

CINEMA PANOPTICUM GN

(Fantagraphics DEC111078 $16.99)

Thomas Ott presents five graphic horror novelettes, all executed in his distinctively hyper-detailed scratchboard style. No one else produces comics quite like Ott's moody, evocative masterworks...

I SHOULD BE ABLE TO FIND THOR FAST—
—THROUGH THE SPIDER TRACER THAT MJ ALWAYS WEARS!
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DARKNESS #100

(Image/Top Cow DEC110452 $4.99)

Phil Hester says farewell to Jackie Estacado in this series that brings him face to face with the source of his power and his misery—the Darkness itself!

DICKS #1

(Avatar DEC110861 $4.99)

Garth Ennis & John McCrea's equal-opportunity-offender series that makes ***The Boys*** seem positively tame gets remastered—and for the first time, they've added color to the adventures of the world's most disturbing—and disturbed—private investigators.

EMITOWN TP VOL 2

(Image DEC110490 $24.99)

More delightfully memorable personal insights by *Emi Lenox*, who shares all the highs and lows of her life with readership in her comics diary.

HARVEY PEKAR'S CLEVELAND HC

(Top Shelf DEC111207 $21.99)

The late Harvey Pekar, autobiographical comics pioneer, wrote this graphic novel that blends Pekar's famous personal insights with glimpses into the history of Cleveland.

MY FRIEND DAHMER SC

(Abrams NOV110675 $17.95)

What would it be like to have gone to school with Jeffrey Dahmer? *Derf Backderf* knows, and he shares the experience with us in this insightful graphic novel.

NEW AVENGERS #21

(Marvel DEC110610 $3.99)

At long last, the New Avengers take on the Dark Avengers in a no-holds-barred confrontation... and one Avenger leaves the team in defeat.

RALPH WIGGUM COMICS #1

(Bongo DEC110902 $2.99)

That wacky Wiggum kid Ralph gets his own Simpsons spinoff series. It could only happen in comics!

SUICIDE SQUAD #6

(DC DEC110260 $2.99)

Everybody's looking for something. Deadshot is looking for the maniacal Harley Quinn, while Harley is looking for her beloved Joker... and nothing good can come out of either hunt.

FYI: Must-Have Additions to Your Reference Library

ALTER EGO #107

(TwoMorrows DEC111275 $8.95)

An unused Golden Age cover by—and an interview with—acclaimed Batman illustrator *Dick Sprang* kicks off Batman issue, which also features an interview with *Jim Mooney* and unseen art by *Bob Kane, Jerry Robinson, Win Mortimer, Shelly Moldoff, & Charles Paris.*

MULTIVERSE MAGAZINE #1

(Ardden DEC110839 $4.99)

Could this be the thinking fan's ***Wizard Magazine***? Affordably priced, an intelligent blend of commentary and opinion... it's been too long since the industry had a magazine of this sort produced by people who actually *like* comics!

SUPERHEROES OF ROUND TABLE SC

(McFarland JAN121381 $40.00)

Jason Tondro links superhero comics to Arthurian myth, Spenser, and Shakespeare, it draws analogies between comics and ***The Faerie Queene, The Tempest***, Malory's ***Morte d'Arthur*** and more.

Collected Cool: February's Best Reprint

AVENGERS OMNIBUS HC VOL 1

(Marvel SEP110637 $99.99)

This hefty compendium collects the Silver Age ***Avengers #s 1-30*** by *Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, Don Heck*, and others, complete with all the letters columns and features that made the Marvel Age so much fun back in the mid-1960s.

DEADMAN TP VOL 2

(DC NOV110199 $14.99)

The last half of Deadman's solo Silver Age adventures are featured in this collection of tales from ***Strange Adventures #s 214-216, Brave & Bold #s 79 & 86***, and more, featuring art by *Neal Adams.*

FLEX MENTALLO, MAN OF MUSCLE MYSTERY DELUXE HC

(Vertigo/DC OCT110285 $22.99)

Collects the hard-to-find and never-before-reprinted *Doom Patrol* spinoff series by *Grant Morrison & Frank Quitely.*

PRINCE VALIANT HC VOL 5 1945-1946

(Fantagraphics DEC111084 $29.99)

Not only does this volume offer prime ***Prince Valiant,*** but half the strips in this volume also include Hal Foster's bonus "Medieval Castle" companion strip.

SHOWCASE PRESENTS THE SPECTRE TP VOL 1

(DC OCT110255 $19.99)

DC's first Silver Age metaphysically-cosmic hero gets his long-overdue collection. This 500+ page compendium includes ***Showcase #s 60, 61, & 64, Spectre #s 1-10, Adventure #s 431-440***, and much more, featuring material by *Murphy Anderson, Jerry Grandenetti, Neal Adams, Jim Aparo*, and others.

IS A MOTHER ALWAYS RIGHT WHEN IT COMES TO PICKING THE MAN YOU SHOULD LOVE? Read "SOMEONE OF MY OWN TO LOVE!"
Young Love
JUNE
HOW CAN I SAY GOODBYE TO THE MAN I LOVE—SO MARRY THE MAN MY MOTHER PICKED—?
SHE WAS GRIMLY SURE THAT SHE'D NEVER FALL IN LOVE IN A DRAMATIC THING INTO THE HEART AND MIND OF A STERN GIRL... AN EMPTY HEART.
SPECIAL! STARTING IN THIS ISSUE, AN EXCLUSIVE BEAUTY COLUMN BY Jill Taylor— AND MANY MORE STORIES AND FEATURES!

SHOWCASE PRESENTS YOUNG LOVE TP VOL 1

(DC NOV110201 $19.99)

February's the month for romance—so here's DC's first-ever collection of classic romance tales from ***Young Love #39-56***, featuring art by *John Romita, Mike Sekowsky, Don Heck, Gene Colan, Jay Scott Pike*, and others.

X-MEN: AGE OF APOCALYPSE OMNIBUS HC

(Marvel SEP110635 $125.00)

The comics event of 1995 is collected in this whopper of a hardcover... and it's just in time, what with the Age of Apocalypse returning this spring!

Hot Commodities: February's Hottest Merchandising & Collectibles

ADAM HUGHES INSPIRED VAMPIRELLA STATUE

(Dynamite MAY111013 $189.99)

The incomparable art of *Adam Hughes* is the inspiration for this striking sculpture of the sensual bloodsucker.

CATWOMAN 1/4 SCALE MUSEUM QUALITY STATUE

(DC Direct NOV110250 $325.00)

The latest addition to DC's impressive line of quality mixed-media statues.

HAWKEYE MUSEUM POSE STATUE

(Bowen AUG111820 $235.00)

12" tall statue sculpted by the Kucharek Brothers and produced according to the impeccable standards that make Bowen Designs the best of all sculpture studios.

WEAPON X "LAB WIRED" STATUE

(Bowen OCT111744 $250.00)

Bowen Designs statue based on *Barry Windsor-Smith* story arc from ***Marvel Comics Presents #s 73-84.***

TAKE ME BACK--NOW!
FEAR NOT BELOVED! AT ANY MOMENT, THY MEMORY SHALL RETURN!
THERE'S ONE WAY OUT OF THIS NIGHTMARE--
"—PETER WILL FIND ME---NO MATTER WHERE!"
SHE DROPPED HER SPIDER TRACER! AND THEY'RE TOO FAR AWAY FOR MY SPIDER SENSE!
STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 1-14-12
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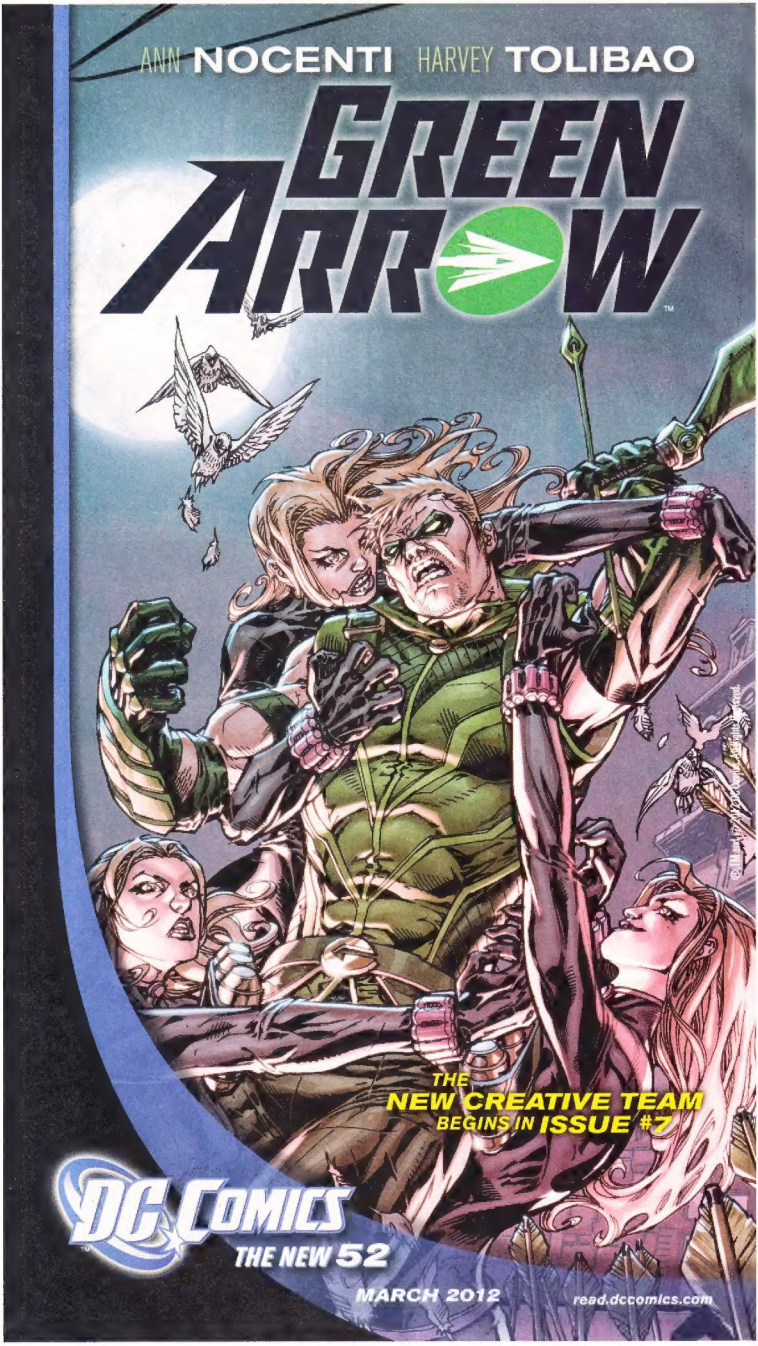
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